

OSCAR LEESER  
MAYOR

TOMMY GONZALEZ  
CITY MANAGER



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**February 25, 2015**

**NEWS RELEASE**

## **Flu Virus Continues to Circulate**

### **New cases continue to be reported locally**

**EL PASO, Texas** – The recent cold snap is a reminder that winter isn't quite over yet, and new cases of influenza are a reminder that the flu season isn't quite over yet either. Between February 15 and February 21, 2015, the City of El Paso Department of Public Health recorded 193 new cases of the flu in the El Paso area. The total number of flu cases this season is now at 5,239. This is compared to 3,396 cases at this time last year.

"The good news is that we are beginning to see a steady decrease in the number of cases being reported each week," said Fernando Gonzalez, Lead Epidemiologist. "We could have smaller peaks in the coming weeks, but we hope the number of cases remain relatively low."

Two people with underlying medical conditions have succumbed to the disease this season. That is why health officials continue to recommend preventive measures to combat the disease. They include the "4 C's" which have proven to be effective in preventing the spread of the flu virus.

- 1. CLEAN** - Wash your hands often. Scrub your hands for at least 30 seconds with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- 2. COVER** - Cover your cough. Use a tissue to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Don't have a tissue? The crook of your elbow will do.
- 3. CONTAIN** - Contain germs by steering clear of others who are sick. If you do get sick, stay home until you're well again, so you don't spread more germs.
- 4. CALL** - Call or see your doctor if you or your child has a fever of greater than 100 degrees.

In addition to this advice, the Department's Immunization program is also offering flu vaccines to children ages six months to 18-years-old who are covered by Medicaid (ALL Texas Medicaid plans accepted), are underinsured, or do not have health insurance, and who meet eligibility requirements. The cost is \$10.00.

The Department stocks only a limited amount of adult vaccine and the cost is \$40.00. Clients are urged to contact the clinic of their choice to verify availability of both the children's and adult vaccines prior to their visit. Residents may also consult with their primary care provider or a local retail outlet of their choice in order to obtain the adult vaccine. For more information contact the appointments desk at (915) 212-6555.

Local seniors are also reminded that the flu vaccine is still available free of charge via the *Vaccinations for Health* program. Residents of El Paso and Hudspeth Counties who are 50 years of age or older and either

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*Promote Transparent and Consistent Communication Among All Members of the Community*

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are on Medicaid or are not insured qualify to receive the flu vaccine as well as a basic health screening, pneumonia vaccine, and a colorectal cancer screening kit. The next Vaccinations for Health event will take place from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on:

**February 28, 2015: Mary Webb Park, 3401 East Missouri**

Vaccinations for Health is a project of the City of El Paso Fire and Health Departments with the goal of increasing the wellness of our local senior citizens who do not have access to these services.

**Education**

In effort to increase awareness about influenza and ways the public can protect themselves, the Department of Health offers a flu educational session presented by the Speakers Bureau. Local civic and community organizations can schedule a presentation that will include background on the disease, prevention methods, as well as what people can look out for in regards to signs and symptoms of infection. Presentations can be scheduled by visiting [www.EPHealth.com](http://www.EPHealth.com), and then clicking on the Speakers Bureau link under Special Projects.

These services support the City of El Paso's strategic goal to nurture and promote a healthy, sustainable community. For more information on the programs and services offered by the Department of Public Health, visit [EPHealth.com](http://EPHealth.com) or dial 2-1-1.

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**Media Contact:** Ramon Herrera  
Lead Public Affairs Coordinator  
(915) 212-1202 or (915) 493-4324